

Wyndcliffe (Linden Grove)  
Mill Road  
Rhinebeck Vicinity  
Dutchess County  
New York

HABS No. NY-5627

HABS,  
NY,  
14-RHINB.V,  
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

14-RHINB.V  
2-

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WYNDCLYFFE (Linden Grove)

HABS No. NY-5627

Location: Mill Road, Rhinecliff Vicinity, Dutchess County, New York.

Present Owner: Gary Levine

Present Occupant: Vacant.

Significance: Constructed in the popular Norman style, the design of this large brick house is attributed to local architect George Veitch. The master mason, John Byrd, executed the highly varied ornamental brickwork using only rectangular and few molded bricks. Originally called Wyndclyffe, the house was used as a weekend and summer residence by its first owner, Elizabeth Schermerhorn Jones of New York City. Edith Jones Wharton was a frequent childhood visitor. Wyndclyffe may have influenced Miss Wharton in her book Hudson River Bracketed. Wyndclyffe was renamed Linden Grove by Andrew Finck, the second owner, in 1886.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1853.
2. Architect: Although no documentation has been found, Wyndclyffe has been attributed to George Veitch. Veitch, an architect, designed the first Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah in Rhinebeck in 1852. Miss Jones, for whom Wyndclyffe was erected, and her brother Edward, were founders and major contributors to the building fund. Thus, it seems likely that Miss Jones may have selected the same local architect for her own house erected a year later. Wyndclyffe's master mason, John Byrd, later worked with Veitch in 1864 on St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church in Rhinecliff. In 1878, Veitch designed a building for School District No. 2 in Rhinecliff; his name is inscribed on a marble plaque above the door. He is buried in the Rhinebeck cemetery.
3. Original and subsequent owners:  
  
1852 Deed December 2, 1852 recorded December 3, 1852 in Book 97  
page 352

John N. Cramer and Phebe M., his wife, and  
John L. Smith and Eliza R., his wife  
to  
Elizabeth Schermerhorn Jones for \$19,000 described by a  
survey and map by Hazard Champlin on June 15, 1835.

1886 Deed November 20, 1886 recorded on December 3, 1886 in Book  
227 page 534

William G. Schermerhorn, James F. Chamberlain and Albion P.  
Marr, executors of the will of Elizabeth S. Jones  
to  
Andrew Finck of \$25,000 including house and a land parcel.

1901 Deed April 15, 1901 recorded on May 10, 1904 in Book 334  
page 33

Andrew Finck, deceased, by August Finck, sole surviving  
executor  
to  
August Finck for \$1.00 for Linden Hall

1901 Deed April 15, 1901 recorded May 16, 1904 in Book 334 page  
36

The Devisees of Andrew Finck  
to  
August Finck for \$1.00 (quitclaim to Linden Hall)

1919 Deed July 23, 1919 recorded July 26, 1919 in Book 406 page  
380

Charles L. Hoffman, referee in a suit brought by heirs and  
devisees of the estate of Louisa Finck, deceased, wife of  
August Finck, deceased  
to  
Theodore Finck

1927 Deed June 24, 1927 recorded June 27, 1927 in Book 477 page  
197

Anna W. Rice, formerly Anna W. Finck, sole devisee under  
the last will and testament of Theodore Finck  
to  
Nissin S. Hanoka, Rebecca Hanoka and Mrs. Victoria Hazan  
for \$100 with a \$5000 mortgage for Linden Hall and 31.8  
acres

1934 Deed September 18, 1934 recorded September 22, 1934 in Book  
541 page 2

Henry J. Kelly, referee in mortgage foreclosure against  
Nissin S. Hanoka, Rebecca Hanoka, Mrs. Victoria Hazan and  
others  
to  
Anna W. Rice for \$1,117.94 bid at court auction

- 1936 Deed November 28, 1936 recorded December 4, 1936 in Book 556 page 225  
Anna W. Rice  
to  
Henry and Rae S. Lesavoy for \$100 with a \$3.00 tax stamp for Linden Hall with 20 acres
- 1950 Deed February 13, 1950 recorded March 24, 1950 in Book 739 page 138  
Henry and Rae S. Lesavoy  
to  
I. Lawrence Lesavoy for \$1.00 for Linden Hall with 21 acres
- 1953 Deed January 5, 1953 recorded January 14, 1953 in Book 822 page 51  
Lesavoy Foundation  
to  
Carl S. Wilson and Paul Kent for \$1.00 and \$11.00 in stamps
- 1961 Deed August 10, 1961 recorded August 11, 1961 in Book 1063 page 137  
Carl S. Wilson and Paul Kent  
to  
Charles and Betty Blair Eggert for \$12,500.00
- 1971 Deed October 6, 1971 recorded October 6, 1971 in Book 1317 page 700  
Charles and Betty Blair Eggert  
to  
Grace Lanini for \$85,000 for Linden Hall, in two parcels of 17.6 and 0.85 acres.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The master mason was John Byrd. Some of the bricks are stamped TERRY, from the Terry Brick Yard, Kingston, New York. The mortar is thought to be made from the then new Rosendale cement.
5. Original plans and construction: Wyndclyffe's picturesque elevations and spaces are organized around a main axis and two cross axes. The main axis carries the entrance steps, porch, door, hall, and central hall. The cross axes are located at either end of the central hall.
6. Alterations and additions: Both porches, which repeat many of Wyndclyffe's decorative details, were added after 1853.

B. Historical Context:

A prominent New Yorker, Elizabeth Schermerhorn Jones (1810-1876), aunt of the writer, Edith Jones Wharton, purchased land in Rhinebeck in 1852. She probably contracted George Veitch

to design her house early in 1853. Miss Jones frequently entertained Henry and William James, nephews of Augustus and John James, neighbors who owned Linwood, the old Tillotson estate. Edward Jones, Miss Jones' brother, died in 1869. After his aunt's death in 1876, Edward Jones, Jr. retained a life interest in Wyndclyffe.

The Jones estate was known as Wyndclyffe when Henry Winthrop Sargent praised it as "a very successful and distinctive house, with much the appearance of some of the smaller Scotch castles" in his 1859 supplement of Downing's A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America. After Andrew Finck purchased Wyndclyffe, it became known as Linden Grove, as it was identified in Beers Atlas of the Hudson River Valley (1891). Locally, it was called variously Finck's Castle, Schwartz-Finck Castle, and Linden Hall.

According to Louis Auchincloss, Edith Wharton's biographer, Mrs. Wharton was a frequent childhood visitor who later described Wyndclyffe as "The Willows" in Hudson River Bracketed.\* In her autobiography, A Backward Glance (1933), Mrs. Wharton wrote about Wyndclyffe and her aunt.

...But no memories of those years survive, save those I have mentioned, and one other, a good deal dimmer, of going to stay one summer with my Aunt Elizabeth, my father's unmarried sister, who had a house at Rhinebeck-on-the-Hudson. This aunt, who I remember as a ramrod-backed old lady compounded of steel and granite, had been threatened in her youth with the 'consumption' which had already carried off a brother and sister. Few families in that day escaped the scourge of tuberculosis...when Elizabeth in her turn began to pine, her parents...decided to try curing her at home. They therefore shut her up on October in her bedroom in the New York house in Mercer Street, lit the fire, sealed up the windows, and did not let her out again until the following June, when she emerged in perfect health, to live till seventy. My aunt's house, called Rhinecliff, afterward became a vivid picture in the gallery of my little girlhood; but among those earliest impressions only one is connected with it; that of a night when, as I was ready to affirm, there was a Wolf under my bed...

The effect of terror produced by the house at Rhinecliff was no doubt due to what seemed to me its intolerable ugliness. My visual sensibility must always have been too keen for middling pleasure; my photographic memory of rooms

\* While the sense of Linden Grove is in the house described as "The Willows," in Hudson River Bracketed, the architectural description is not fully compatible.

and houses - even those seen but briefly, or at long intervals - was from my earliest years a source of inarticulate misery, for I was always vaguely frightened by ugliness. I can still remember hating everything at Rhinecliff, which, as I saw, on rediscovering it some years later, was an expensive but dour specimen of Hudson River Gothic; and from the first I was obscurely conscious of a queer resemblance between the granite exterior of Aunt Elizabeth and her grimly comfortable home, between her battlemented caps and the turrets of Rhinecliff...

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deed Books, Recorder of Deeds, Dutchess County Courthouse, Poughkeepsie, New York.

2. Secondary and published sources:

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Bruce, Wallace. The Hudson. New York: Bryant Union Company, 1907.

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Smith, Edward M. History of Rhinebeck. Rhinebeck: Edward M. Smith, 1881.

Wharton, Edith Newbold Jones. A Backward Glance. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964.

Wharton, Edith. Hudson River Bracketed.

Edited by Susan Stein, 1981

PART II. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was sponsored jointly by the National Park Service and the Dutchess County Landmarks Association with grants from the New York State Council on the Arts and further assistance from IBM Mid-Hudson Valley, The Richard Hampton Jenrette Foundation, The Rhinebeck Historical Society and Private Donors; measured and drawn during the summer of 1973 and 1974 under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), by Richard Crowley (Architect, Rhinebeck), Project Supervisor, with, during 1973, Kevin Harrington (Cornell University), Historian, Thomas R. Hauck (Ohio State University), and Joseph Bilello (Washington University), Architects, and Gerald Karr (University of Colorado) and Mary Lou Oehrlein (Iowa State University), Student Assistant Architects, and with, during 1974, Susan Brendel (Columbia University), Historian, and Randy Abramson (Washington University), Robert Ferland (Cornell University), Thomas Foster (Cornell University), and Stanley Tang (University of Pennsylvania), Assistant Architects, at Rhinebeck, New York. The historical and descriptive data was edited for HABS in 1981 by Architectural Historian Susan Stein. Final preparation of the documentation was carried out in the HABS Washington Office by Paul Dolinsky, HABS Architect, and Lucy Pope Wheeler, HABS Writer/Editor.

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ADDENDUM TO  
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